



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
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Philadelphia, PA 19107

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Public Health and Human Services to hold public hearings regarding treatment of opioid dependency for Medicaid beneficiaries and the cash business model around this treatment that fosters overprescribing, medication abuse, misuse and diversion by patients not committed to recovery.

WHEREAS, The Centers of Disease Control has designated opioid prescription addiction a national epidemic where more than 40 people die daily from overdoses involving narcotic pain relievers; and

WHEREAS, The decade long rise in the illicit use of prescription drugs has fueled a large increase in heroin use and addiction. The attorney general's office estimates that Pennsylvania now has 40,000 heroin users; and

WHEREAS, According to the City's Office of Addiction Services, Philadelphia has the cheapest and most potent heroin in the nation. Philadelphia continues to experience the brunt of the epidemic with overdose deaths due to heroin doubling from 2010 to 2012 and continuing to climb; and

WHEREAS, Opioid dependency is most successful when motivated patients are treated by quality physicians; and

WHEREAS, Access to opioid treatment for Medicaid recipients remains largely out of reach for residents of Philadelphia as the dominant treatment model requires patients to pay cash for their medical treatment. Today, the top 8 opioid providers in Philadelphia all require cash for their medical services; and

WHEREAS, The cash business model around this treatment fosters overprescribing, medication abuse, misuse and diversion by patients not committed to recovery; and

WHEREAS, Fewer than ten buprenorphine certified providers are available to Medicaid recipients through the City's behavioral health agency (CBH); and

WHEREAS, Treatment centers that utilize the cash model are impacting the quality of life in our neighborhoods so much so that Philadelphia has passed local law to support the closure of facilities deemed a public nuisance; and

WHEREAS, Addressing the opioid epidemic will require the effort of many stakeholders including providers, payers, government and law enforcement; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That council does hereby authorize the Committee on Public Health and Human Service to hold public hearing regarding access to opioid treatment for Medicaid recipients and other citizens of Philadelphia.